

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



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UE workers tell Wells Fargo: Keep our plant open

Bank gets billions in bailout as union rallies to save jobs

By Dante Strobino

In the latest face-off in the growing struggle between workers and banks, more than 100 workers at Quad City Die Casting in Moline, Ill., are now being told that their plant will close on July 12 if Wells Fargo does not extend the company's loan. These workers are members of United Electrical Workers Local 1174.

Wells Fargo has received more than \$25 billion in federal bailout money through the Troubled Assets Relief Program. As mass anger grows against the banks, which have now received more than \$10 trillion from the government, workers are still being thrown out of their jobs and homes.

Union calls day of action June 23

UE is calling for a national day of action on Tuesday, June 23 to bring pressure on Wells Fargo and Wachovia—which Wells Fargo recently acquired—to extend the loan to keep the Quad City Die Casting plant open.

The union plans actions in front of Wells Fargo and Wachovia offices in cities across the country including Atlanta; Baltimore; Boston; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Charleston, W. Va.; Chicago; Denver; La Crosse, Wis.; New Haven, Conn.; Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Erie, Pa. Also, protests are planned for Portland, Ore.; Raleigh, N.C.; Washington, D.C.; Salt Lake City and in Southern California. For more information about these demonstrations, see www.ueillinois.org.

At the same Web site, UE organizer Leah Fried writes: "Quad City Die Casting has been in business for 60 years, making precision metal parts farm and recreation equipment. Its customers include Kawasaki Motors and Case New Holland. Like many businesses, QCDC has seen a drop in orders recently, but it has not lost any customers."

"The company was profitable before the worst of the

economic crisis hit last fall, and there's no reason to believe that it would not return to profitability in a general economic recovery. During a recession like this, access to credit is essential for small businesses to weather the storm. But Wells Fargo, despite its long-term financial relationship with QCDC that includes managing the workers' pension, pulled the plug. This has left workers wondering what the purpose of the TARP bailout was in the first place."

Workers rally in Chicago

Fried reports that on June 11, hundreds of workers from several local unions and community supporters rallied outside of a Wells Fargo office building in Chicago to put pressure on the company.

Debbie Johann, who has worked for 31 years at Quad City Die Casting, and is a member of UE Local 1174, spoke to the crowd. She said, "We just want Wells Fargo to help us out and extend credit and keep the plant open. ... It is a hundred jobs. People are going to lose their homes, lose their cars. What do they want us to do, live in a cardboard box?"

UE members are demanding that Wells Fargo extend loans to QCDC until another financer or a new buyer can intervene. Their UE sisters and brothers in Chicago who occupied the Republic Windows and Doors factory last December have inspired them.

Before the Republic struggle erupted, Bank of America had refused to extend loans to keep the plant open. Once the UE Local 1110 members at Republic took bold action to occupy the plant for six days and galvanized international support behind their struggle, the bankers were forced to negotiate a settlement with the workers.

The former Republic plant has reopened with a new owner: Serious Materials. The company has recognized UE Local 1110 and has negotiated its first contract, which

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requires the owners to bring back these workers as their sales increase. Several workers have already returned to work and more are to return soon.

UE Local 1110 Vice President Melvin Macklin told Workers World that, "Just like we called on Bank of America to be responsible, the Quad City Die Casting workers are calling on Wells Fargo. This is the same fight."

Macklin continued: "Wells Fargo has been behind a lot of stuff lately, even the Hartmarx suit company closing in Chicago. Another company wanted to purchase the Hartmarx facility to keep them in business but Wells Fargo decided to liquidate that company and go with a lower bidder.

"This does not make sense especially since they received bailout money. They are choosing not to help. This is hundreds of jobs, representing hundreds of families that could be saved."

Wells Fargo is also being held responsible for racist lending policies in Baltimore, where many African Americans were targeted for high-interest subprime mortgage loans. The city of Baltimore is suing Wells Fargo for targeting African-American and poor homeowners with their predatory loans, which caused a very high rate of foreclosures and vacant properties in Black communities. □

A queer youth's perspective

The following is adapted from a talk by LeiLani Dowell at a Workers World Party meeting in New York City on June 19

The People's Summit and Tent City in Detroit was by far one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had. It was like going to Cuba, or Venezuela, and seeing the level of solidarity that exists among the people in those countries—solidarity that is borne of the struggle to build, in the case of Venezuela, or retain, in the case of Cuba, socialism.

Socialism didn't come to Detroit with the People's Summit. But the message of it sure did, loud and clear,

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**Tent City a
'most amazing'
experience**

WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

Obama's speech, Palestinians & African Americans

By Dolores Cox

On June 4 President Barack Obama addressed the Muslim world while visiting Cairo, Egypt. His speech covered seven major sources of tension between the U.S. and Muslims worldwide. He stated that "we should not ignore sources of tension," but "we must face these tensions squarely." Overall, however, Obama's speech contained a good deal of rhetoric, contradiction and hypocrisy.

Obama referred to the U.S. as being a country possessing "principles of justice, tolerance and the dignity of all human beings." He quoted the Holy Koran as telling us to "Be conscious of God and speak always the truth." He mentioned that "there must be sustained effort to listen to each other, learn from each other, respect one another and seek a common ground." Yet the U.S. turned a deaf ear and boycotted the U.N. World Conference Against Racism-Durban Review. This boycott was a lost opportunity for the U.S. government to hear about the need for reparations for African-American descendants of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery (the Black holocaust).

In addressing the issue of confronting violent extremism, Obama stated that the U.S. "rejects the killing of innocent men, women and children who've done nothing to harm anybody." He condemned Al-Qaeda for choosing to "ruthlessly murder them" and who "state their determination to kill on a massive scale." And that "when innocents are slaughtered, that is a stain on our collective conscience." Why haven't the massive killing of innocent Indigenous Americans and enslaved Africans also been considered ruthless and a stain on our collective conscience?

Obama acknowledged the displacement of the Palestinians, yet the U.S. has never spoken to the displacement of Native peoples or of Hurricane Katrina survivors and their right to return. And when the U.S. bombs, invades, occupies and kills innocent people in other countries, isn't it acting without conscience? Aren't Palestinian civilians also innocent victims who've done nothing to harm anybody? So why hasn't the U.S. condemned Israeli extremists, violence and terrorism? The U.S. continuing to militarily arm Israel and aid that economy as the Israeli military kill innocent Palestinians and ruthlessly murder them on a massive scale should also be viewed as a stain.

"America's strong bonds with Israel are unbreakable," said Obama. They're "based upon cultural and historical ties and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied." Aren't these ties of white European supremacists' control and domination of non-whites rooted in privilege, entitlement, and the right to occupy, colonize and enslave?

In stating that "Palestinians must abandon violence" and that "resistance through violence and killing is wrong and does not succeed," Obama made reference to the Black experience in the U.S. including slavery and segregation. He said "it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the center of its [U.S.] founding."

Whether everyone agrees with this premise or not, to this day, Black folks have not won "full and equal rights." They're still struggling to obtain their civil and human rights. Blacks are still being oppressed and fighting for

COMMENTARY



Dolores Cox, with scarf, June 18, NYC.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

equal opportunity, liberation, true democracy as well as political, economic and social justice. The U.S. has yet to meet the stated "ideals at the center of its founding."

Obama seemed to overlook the fact that while peacefully protesting and resisting, Blacks were constantly being terrorized, be they lynched, bombed, imprisoned, beaten or murdered. Martin Luther King Jr., himself, who preached

non-violence, was assassinated in the midst of peaceful resistance. The safety of Blacks in the U.S. is still not ensured, as hateful racist attitudes and actions still persist. There is still no equal protection under the law, still racial discrimination and still no fully integrated society.

"So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, and who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity," Obama said. "Any world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail," he said. Well, this should apply not only to the Middle East but to dominant white supremacist ideology in the U.S.

Obama stated he intends to personally pursue what's in Israeli and Palestinian interests "with all the patience that the task requires." Hopefully, this "patience" is not synonymous with the enforcement of the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court Brown v. Board of Education ruling declaring "separate but equal" as unconstitutional and ordering school desegregation "with all deliberate speed," which in reality proceeded at a snail's pace.

Did the U.S. and Israel expect that Palestinians would just quietly agree to be victimized, and not object or rebel against constant aggression, encroachment and occupation? Palestinians, like Blacks, will continue to resist injustice and oppression; will speak truth to power; will continue to fight back for their dignity and human rights. Palestinians will continue to fight for the right to return home; for their land and for their right to exist. The true victims of the conflict are the Palestinians, not the Israelis.

Continued on page 3

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For now

Katrina survivors won't be evicted

By Monica Moorehead

The nightmare that has haunted thousands of Katrina survivors since storms and decrepit levees destroyed a significant portion of the Gulf Coast during the late summer of 2005 continues in large part today. Since hurricanes Katrina and Rita took place, hundreds of thousands of people, mainly Black and poor, have been forced to relocate to other cities due to the racist negligence of the U.S. government.

This past April and May, many survivors in parts of Mississippi and Louisiana, especially New Orleans, had been threat-

ened with mass evictions from trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA told families that they would have to vacate within 30 days.

In Mississippi alone, nearly 40,000 families live in either trailers or mobile homes.

These inadequate trailers have become long-term housing out of necessity for those who have been either permanently displaced or are waiting for their homes to be rebuilt. Many of these trailers, condemned as death traps, were discovered to have toxic levels of formaldehyde, causing high incidences of asthma, em-

physema and other respiratory ailments.

Right before the June 1 deadline, FEMA reversed its decision on the trailer evictions, thanks to a national campaign of angry protest against this inhumane policy. FEMA then announced that the government would sell trailers for \$5 or less.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has promised \$50 million worth of permanent housing vouchers for about 7,000 families, mainly indigent, disabled and elderly. However, some are doubtful that the government will carry through with this commitment.

Martha Kegel, director of Unity of Greater New Orleans, a homeless service agency, told the June 3 New York Times, "It's been such a long history of FEMA making announcements in the media and nothing much in the way of assistance has ever trickled down to the elderly and disabled people trying to repair their homes."

Katrina survivors may have won a temporary reprieve on the issue of the trailers, but the fight for justice is far from over. The larger struggle involves the complete right to return, which means the right to housing, education, health care, jobs and other forms of overdue reparations. □

Coalition plans to take back WBAI

Some 100 people, many of them movement activists, gathered for a rally called by the Coalition to Take Back WBAI outside the station's Wall Street offices on June 17 to protest the ongoing purge of some of the station's most progressive voices. "Wake Up Call" newscaster Don Debar and labor specialist Mimi Rosenberg, who had just been excised by the new management, joined the protest. Both were associated with the morning show that has already been cut by one hour, and now airs only from 6 to 8 a.m., Monday to Friday.

For decades, New Yorkers have relied on WBAI 99.5 FM, part of the Pacifica Radio Network, for radio broadcasting that provides real news and perspectives not filtered by corporate media. Now, the station has been seized by the Pacifica Corp., along with the WBAI Local Station Board majority, who are attempting to impose their own brand of programming by removing some of the staff and programming most closely connected with New York's oppressed and marginalized communities.

Not only have WBAI's progressive Black general manager Tony Riddle and program director Bernard White been fired, but other progressive staff have been let go in New York as well as in Califor-

nia. Pacifica Corp.'s interim executive director Grace Aaron has imposed a gag rule threatening to fire any programmer who discusses these matters on the air.

Coalition spokespersons said the rally is a starting point and that they will continue activities aimed at reversing what they call a "coup." Their goals include reinstatement of the removed WBAI programmers, lifting the gag rule and returning genuine autonomy to the station. There is also a recall campaign to remove from office two of the Local Station Board members whom the Coalition considers most harmful to local autonomy, board chair Mitchel Cohen and board member and multimillionaire marketing executive Steve Brown. For more information visit justiceunity.org.

— Report and photo by John Catalinotto



June 17 protest at WBAI offices.

War resisters punished, await charges

By Dee Knight

U.S. Iraq war resister Cliff Cornell was sentenced last week to 12 months hard labor and a bad conduct discharge for refusing to participate in the war in Iraq and for going to Canada in 2005. He was

forced out of Canada in January by the Bushite government of Stephen Harper.

War resister Dustin Che Stevens and about 50 others have been in limbo at Fort Bragg, N.C., since January. Sarah Lazare, project coordinator at Courage to Resist, wrote about their story for online news journal Truthout (June 16).

Stevens has been held for five months without charges. He says that others have been held for up to a year in overcrowded and filthy conditions.

"We should just shoot you all," one commander yelled at them. Stevens commented that "people around me are literally going crazy. I hear people threaten suicide on a daily basis."

Stevens reported that the command offered a free pass to any of them who agreed to deploy to Afghanistan. About 10 people took up the offer.

James Branum, Stevens' civilian lawyer, said: "People are in this unit for months and months. They take forever to do anything. You're going to be there six months if you're lucky, 12 if you're not."

Kathy Gilberd, of the National Lawyers Guild's Military Law Task Force, commented that "a lot of times these units are run by senior enlisted personnel who are obnoxious and give people a hard time." She added that "most people who are on restriction don't even know whose authority places them on it and don't know that senior enlisted personnel don't have the authority they often claim to have."

In May 2002, after five months in the Army, Stevens declared that he wanted to quit. He had joined the army to escape a broken home, thinking he had few other options. Since day one he had panic and anxiety attacks, and was morally opposed



Dustin Che Stevens

to his service and to deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan. His command simply sent him home to wait for his discharge papers, which never showed up.

Seven years later, during a routine traffic stop, cops told Stevens there was a warrant for his arrest and whisked him off to military custody. "This whole time, I'd been living my life: working, paying taxes, had a car and apartment," he says. Since Jan. 15 he has been in limbo, biding his time while he awaits charges that might be months away. The months of detention will not count toward his sentence.

Stevens says people being held with him went absent without leave for various reasons—some because they were opposed to the war, some because the Army wouldn't let them leave to tend to family problems, and some because of medical problems.

Carl Davison, an Iraq war resister and member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, commented that "AWOL troops being held in a replacement unit is totally absurd and unusual. It is an example of how the command has plenty of ways to punish people and enforce discipline, bypassing the formal justice system. Smoking people, giving them unofficial duties, mistreatment, and in this case, making an example out of people and segregating them—are all informal mechanisms of punishment commonly used in the military."

Davison added that "people who follow their consciences deserve our support, and there needs to be a highly vocal community out there to let them know they are not alone."

To support Dustin Che Stevens, go to www.courageto resist.org. □

Letter to the editor

Fallacy of 'late-term abortion'

The article on the assassination of Dr. Tiller (June 11) was excellent.

I appreciate that the writer avoided the phrase "late-term abortion." This term has been adopted by the media and unfortunately even many people who are for reproductive choice repeat it unthink-

ingly. It has no medical meaning, but like "partial-birth abortion" was concocted by anti-choice forces to conjure up a horrible image of a 9-month-old baby being killed.

Don't let the anti-abortion zealots create and manipulate the language used to frame this issue. Words are powerful. As advocates for women let us use words that have scientific meaning, not terms that are meant to vilify and confuse.

It is also important to know why women must resort to therapeutic, medically necessary abortion in the second or third trimester. The main reason is that severe fetal anomalies, often incompatible with life, have been discovered by sonograms performed at 20 weeks or later. Women with wanted pregnancies are faced with a tragic situation.

Also causing delay in obtaining abortion are lack of money and/or lack of local abortion providers. Very young women or girls may be unaware of their pregnancy or in denial. Pregnant women may also develop life-threatening illnesses. These are all heart-wrenching scenarios to which Dr. Tiller responded with compassion and great bravery.

—Ellen Catalinotto, midwife

Obama's speech

Continued from page 2

Obama made several references to God in his speech. Yet morality and ethics are the last considerations of any imperialist. Whether there will be a true shift in the U.S.'s longstanding policy toward the Middle East is doubtful. The U.S.'s plan seems to be to further colonize the Middle East, with Israel being important to this plan, as are the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the end, we must remember that as president of the U.S., Obama, in reality, took an oath to, first and foremost, uphold, protect and advance capitalist and imperialist interests, not necessarily to promote peace, justice or real change for Black or any other oppressed peoples.

Cox is an International Action Center volunteer in New York City.

School Board workers demand:

'NO LAYOFFS!'

The local New York City government led by its mayor, billionaire Michael Bloomberg, deepened its economic assault on all city workers and their unions when it announced proposed layoffs of upwards of 2,600 members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union Local 372.

An emergency rally of close to 2,000, mainly Local 372 members, was held on June 18 near City Hall to denounce the threat of these layoffs and to call for the repeal of a \$9 billion budget for outside contracts. These contracts, involving a "shadow government" of an estimated 100,000 contractors and consultants, have paved the way for drastic cuts in vital social services and the elimination of thousands of city union jobs since 2005.

Local 372, one of the 56 unions under the District Council 37 umbrella, represents the Board of Education employees minus teachers. The union represents lunchroom workers, school aides, health aides and school neighborhood workers. Its members are also paraprofessionals, film inspection assistants, loaders and handlers, hall monitors, substance abuse prevention and intervention specialists, community coordinators, school crossing guards and more.

Militant chants of "No layoffs" could be heard throughout the rally. Under a large



blue banner with the "Our jobs is kids" slogan, rally speakers included Veronica Montgomery-Costa, Local 372 president, who stated that "Mayor Bloomberg can't

solve the crisis on the backs of working people," and William "Bill" Lucy, International Secretary-Treasurer of AFSCME.

— Report and photo by Monica Moorehead

Anti-immigrant climate spurs killings

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

On May 30, three members of the local reactionary Minutemen organization invaded the home of Raul Flores in Arivaca, Ariz., murdering him and his 9-year-old daughter, Brisenia Flores, and wounding his spouse Gina Maria Gonzalez. The racists were dressed in military fatigues. They told the family that they were with the Border Patrol before they ransacked the house and shot them.

Local activists immediately recognized the three Minutemen who were arrested for this atrocity as part of the group that attempted to disrupt May Day 2009 activities in Tucson.

Residents of Arivaca say that the Flores family is well-known and well-liked. They described Raul "Junior" Flores as a good father and a generous man. (Green Valley News June 2)

Arivaca is a small town in Southern Arizona about 10 miles from the border, with a population of a little more than 1,000 people. It is constantly occupied by Border Patrol and Homeland Security agents, and is home to DHS/Boeing high-tech SBINET surveillance towers.

This racist killing follows on the heels of the recent murder of Dr. George Tiller and the attack on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., in which African-American security guard Stephen Johns was killed by a lifelong Nazi. These crimes are not the acts of "lone crazed killers," as the media tend to portray them. They are the result of a racist, anti-immigrant climate whipped up by ultra-right TV talk-show hosts Lou Dobbs, Rush Limbaugh, former U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo and others, of the horrific ICE terror raids, and of the tax money allotted to keep racists like Sheriff Joe Arpaio in operation.

Thirty pieces of anti-immigrant legislation have been introduced in the Arizona state legislature since January. This includes the recent SB 1175, which would



Brisenia Flores, shot and killed during an anti-immigrant raid on her home.

over to federal agents if local charges are dropped.

SB 1280 would make it a felony to "conceal, harbor or shield from detection in any place" an undocumented person.

SB 1069 seeks to eliminate Ethnic Studies programs and multicultural student organizations from all schools in the state.

To add further to this atmosphere of racism and anti-immigrant fervor, a local humanitarian aid volunteer was convicted on federal charges of littering in a

federal park for leaving one-gallon jugs of drinking water at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge; the water is meant to save the lives of undocumented immigrants crossing this wild, rough, dry area. This "crime" carries a sentence of up to one year in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The message sent by the judge and federal prosecutors is clear: Do not attempt to do anything, even the most minor act, to show solidarity with immigrants.

As the capitalist economic crisis continues, the state of Arizona is cutting budgets for education, health care, and all other social programs. In the process it is eliminating the jobs of hundreds of state, county and city workers. Introducing anti-immigrant legislation and whipping up racist sentiment to coincide with the economic crisis are designed to sow divisions and fear among people and keep them from uniting.

But a fight-back movement is building, with youths, elders, students, teachers, workers—Black, white and Latina/os—coming together to demand an end to racism and immigrant-bashing. □

Texas immigration prison protested

By Gloria Rubac
Taylor, Texas

Hundreds of activists, including infants and great grandmothers, held a spirited march and rally in Taylor, Texas, on June 20 to protest the incarceration of men, women and their children at the T. Don Hutto detention center.

On U.N. World Refugee Day, the bright sky and 103-degree heat appeared to embolden demonstrators as they marched from downtown Taylor to the T. Don Hutto immigration prison on the outskirts of this small town in Williamson County.

Chanting "T. Don Hutto—shut it down! I-C-E [Immigration and Customs Enforcement]—shut it Down! C-C-A [Cor-



June 20 protest.

On The Picketline

By Sue Davis

LGBT federal employees gain some rights

On June 17 lesbian, gay, bi and transgender workers employed by the federal government gained a slight recognition of their rights on the job. President Barack Obama signed a presidential memorandum granting LGBT workers sick leave to care for their partners and children. However, the order stopped short of granting health insurance and pension benefits, which are granted by 57 percent of Fortune 500 companies. LGBT groups were united in demanding more.

CWA locals hound AT&T

While Communication Workers union negotiators in five districts from coast to coast have been demanding that AT&T offer its 100,000-plus members a decent contract ever since the old one expired on April 4, rank-and-file AT&T workers have been dogging the company with picket lines, rallies and roasts. In imaginative actions on June 8, Local 4321 held "Quit hogging the profits rallies"—where the workers barbecued ribs and handed out leaflets exposing AT&T's greed—in three Ohio cities. District 6, which represents locals from Missouri to Texas, reported June 17 that AT&T won't budge on its demand that workers pay more—much more—for health coverage, even though the company raked in \$12.9 billion in profits last year. All 2,500 delegates at CWA's national convention also plan to lobby Congress on June 24 to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. (cwa-union, June 21)

SAG signs new contract

After a contentious year-long struggle, both internal and external, to win a new contract, members of the Screen Actors Guild ratified a new contract on June 9 that covers actors in film and digital television productions, motion pictures and new media productions. Ratified by 78 percent of the members who voted, the contract, effective this June 10 through June 30, 2011, establishes the first "template" for payment for actors appearing in new media formats. While that was the primary sticking point, SAG members also won \$105 million in higher wages and increased pension contributions. Alan Rosenberg, SAG president, who had urged members to strike for better terms, noted that having the SAG contract end at the same time as those of other industry players will enable all the creative unions to fight collectively for their rights in 2011. (sag.org, June 9)

Continued on page 5

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Union workers say 'No contract, no peace!'

By Audrey Hoak
Philadelphia

More than 1,000 municipal union workers, many coming straight from work, rallied in the rain in Love Park on June 18 to fight for their rights. Contracts for American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Councils 33 and 47, as well as for the city's fire and police unions, expire on June 30.

Although neither fire nor police unions were visible, there was a strong show of solidarity from Transport Union Workers Local 234, who work for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, and Service Employees union Local 32BJ, whose members include city security guards.

In an effort to cut \$125 million from union contracts over the next five years, Mayor Michael Nutter plans to keep wages flat, lower contributions to union health plans and reorganize pensions. Changes to the pension plans are already in the works if the contacts are not settled by June 30.

The Pennsylvania Retirement Commission is expected to declare Philadelphia's underfunded pension plan "severely distressed." The state rules for distressed pensions declare that a municipality can create a new pension plan first and negotiate with bargaining units afterward.

Current city rules for pension reforms require a change in city law and approval from the unions. Already, Nutter is sending legislation to the City Council that would create a two-tier pension plan, with newly hired workers receiving a lower benefit rate coupled with the option of a 401(k) plan into which they could pay.

Just like the United Auto Workers were forced, under threat of their livelihood, into no-strike pledges, wage freezes, pension cuts and other significant losses in benefits—only to have 22 plants shut down and 3,000 dealerships closed—Nutter's threats to radically change the city workers' benefits without negotiations is like holding a gun to the union leaders' heads.

On stage, Pete Matthews, president of DC Local 33, reflected the sentiment of the crowd when he said, "There is a fiscal crisis in the country, but we didn't cause it." Someone from the throng hollered, "And we're not going to take the fall for it."

After a 40-minute, rain-soaked rally,



WW PHOTO: BERTA JOUBERT-CECI

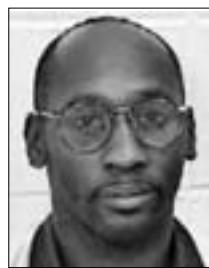
hundreds of rank-and-file workers spontaneously took over the streets, stopping traffic and filling the air with such chants as "No contract, no peace" and "Shut it down!" Rush-hour traffic was blocked at all major intersections surrounding City Hall, opening up only long enough to let an emergency vehicle pass through. Many workers carried "on strike" signs from

previous contract fights.

A city bus blocked the street, and the driver wailed on the horn in solidarity. The strength of the crowd was like an electric current that passed through every person there and a harbinger that if the Nutter administration pushes the give-back demands, the workers are ready to fight back! □

Troy Davis' sister speaks at ILWU convention

By Clarence Thomas
Seattle



to end the blockade of Cuba were also introduced and were passed unanimously.

Davis-Correia thanked the ILWU for permitting her to speak and acknowledged how the ILWU's slogan, "an injury to one is an injury to all," really resonated with her. She praised the union for its history of fighting for social justice.

Davis-Correia told the delegates: "It's so refreshing when I come out here and I see people on the West Coast. I see this union and see Black, White, Hispanic and Asian all fighting for human rights and speaking up. I applaud you because I don't see that in my community. ... I ask you to stand up with us and to encourage other labor unions around the country to stand with us to fight against the death penalty and to save Troy Davis and other innocent people who are in jail and possibly facing execution."

Jack Heyman, ILWU Local 10 Caucus and Convention delegate, introduced Davis-Correia to the important international labor leaders attending the confer-

ence: Itoh Akinobu, president of the Zenkwan Japanese Dock Workers Union; Paddy Crumlin, general-secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia; and Richard Hughes, president of the International Longshore Association. Akinobu and Crumlin assured Davis-Correia that they would get their respective unions to support Davis. Hughes made a commitment to put information about the case on the ILA Web site.

The delegates gave Davis-Correia a standing ovation. Some delegates were moved to tears when she told of the saga of Troy Davis—who has faced three execution dates—to prove his innocence before he is executed. Copies of her remarks were made available to the delegates.

If the state believes the defendant received a fair trial, then it does not consider it unconstitutional to execute an innocent person.

To learn more about the Davis case, go to www.troyanthonydavis.org.

Thomas is a board member of ILWU Local 10 and co-chair of the Million Worker March Movement.



Martina Davis-Correia, the sister of death row prisoner Troy Anthony Davis.

Report slams U.S. over immigration raids

On June 18 the Food and Commercial Workers union issued a report it had commissioned to study a series of immigration raids made by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including those at Swift plants organized by the union. The national commission, which conducted five hearings across the country, blasted the federal government for violating workers' rights and traumatizing communities. "I was totally shocked by the level of abuse," one commission member said. "ICE showed up with weapons drawn and no warrants. ... We saw deprivation of prescription drugs, separation of newborns from nursing mothers." (San Francisco Chronicle, June 19) Testimony before the commission, which came from among others the U.S. secretary of agriculture, a California superior court judge and a law professor, described racial profiling and violations like unreasonable search and detention without due process. (ufcw.org, June 18) □

Continued from page 4

rections Corporation of America)—shut it down!" the crowd from various areas in Texas, including Austin, Houston, the Rio Grande Valley, Bryan-College Station, Williamson County and San Antonio, held banners and signs high as they arrived at the prison.

Speaker after speaker condemned the existence of a prison that incarcerated whole immigrant families, people not charged with any criminal activity, in this remote and austere prison. Most are seeking political asylum and are from Africa, Asia, Mexico, the Middle East and Central and South America.

Fifty people carried a sign that read "Free the children" written in the 50 lan-

guages of those who have been incarcerated at Hutto. More than a dozen signs carried the text of major civil rights statements in history, from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech to the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which the U.S. has not signed.

The Hutto prison, euphemistically named a "residential facility," like it could be a college dorm or a home for seniors, is actually only one of two such ICE prisons in the country where families are incarcerated. The other is in Pennsylvania.

Before a successful legal action by the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas in 2007, the children were forced to wear prison uniforms and were denied adequate health care, schooling and rec-

reation. But despite some improvements made as a result of community organizing, primarily in Austin and Williamson County, the fight is not over.

"We want to shut Hutto down, completely down!" said organizer Jay Johnson-Castro Sr. "Prisons like this should not be allowed to exist!"

One of the most animated and colorful contingents was the PODER (People Organized to Defend Earth and her Resources) Young Scholars for Justice from Austin. Among the dozens and dozens of organizations participating were the Brown Berets, the Texas Indigenous Council, the Cesar Chavez March Committee from San Antonio, and the University of Houston Students for a Democratic Society. □

Texas immigration prison protested

WORKERS WORLD PARTY: Long history in LGBT struggle

Following are excerpts from a talk by Workers World Party member Shelley Ettinger at a WWP meeting in New York City on June 19.

When I volunteered to speak about Workers World Party's history with regard to the party's role in the lesbian, gay, bi and trans struggle, I didn't realize what an enormous task I was taking on. The party's contribution to this struggle is, in fact, a huge topic.

As Frederick Engels showed in his 1884 work, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," and as anthropological research has confirmed, patriarchy and the subjugation of women are not natural or original features of human society. Rather, they arose and displaced the original matriarchal communal cultures when societies divided into classes based on the accumulation of surplus wealth.

All that we today group under the headings of sexism, male supremacy or misogyny is a product of class society. LGBT oppression arose in tandem with the subjugation of women; it is, in fact, part and parcel of women's oppression. While we fight against every manifestation of both, we fight above all to overturn the capitalist system to which women's and LGBT oppression are integral.

While most of the left tendencies in this country now more or less support LGBT demands for civil rights and oppose discrimination, none has been as involved in fighting for these demands as we. Unfortunately, most of them view this movement as a matter of "identity politics," "lifestylism" or, even today, see homosexuality and transgender identities as deformities of capitalism. Of course the opposite is true: It's the oppression, not our sexual or gender identity, that is the deformity of capitalism.

We recognize the treatment of LGBT people as a special oppression under capitalism. "Special oppression" is a Marxist term that identifies specific mistreatment of a minority group arising from capitalism. Racism and the subjugation of women are special oppressions. The constellation of discrimination, homophobia and violence faced by LGBT people amounts to special oppression.

We of course always had LGBT members, and the party had always accepted and treated them well. But the transition to recognizing this struggle as one we must support, and then embracing it and plunging into it, was amazingly quick. By 1971, at only the second Gay Pride march, we were there, carrying banners and signs

and taking a stand.

Our LGBT comrades were of the community, and once the community took to the streets we were, of course, there, pitching in, providing militant leadership when we could, drawing toward us some of the best fighters. There are so many struggles we've played a part in over the years—from street battles in the Village to shutting down shooting of the anti-gay movie "Cruising"; to the fight against Anita Bryant's vicious "Save the Children" campaign to overturn gay rights laws that cities across the country were starting to pass; to twice running a gay candidate for the state senate in Manhattan.

[We were also] deeply involved in the AIDS activist movement, including getting arrested at the first-ever ACT-UP demonstration, the sit-in on Wall Street, and a protest at the U.S. Supreme Court, all the while caring for and then mourning our own comrades with AIDS; and played leading roles in the organizing for the three big LGBT marches on Washington in 1979, 1987 and 1993. For the 1987 march we organized and led the labor contingent, and a comrade was one of two labor speakers, along with Cesar Chavez.

We co-founded the first gay labor organization, the Lesbian and Gay Labor Network, and later helped to found Pride at Work, the official AFL-CIO LGBT constituency group. We fought against the Pentagon's gay ban and then "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"—not because we want LGBT people to join the military, but because we have to uphold the fight against discrimination wherever it takes place.

We fight for same-sex marriage rights, not because we are in favor of the patriarchal institution of marriage but because we demand simple equality. We fight against anti-trans violence and defend lesbians jailed for defending themselves against bashers. We work always to build multinational, anti-racist unity.

Two comrades have made particular contributions to the struggle and to the theoretical understanding of LGBT oppression. One is Bob McCubbin, whose 1976 book "The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal" was groundbreaking in many ways. I remember attending a feminist-socialist conference that year, a young lesbian justifiably wary of Marxist groups, all of which I'd encountered until then were anti-gay. And Youth Against War and Fascism [the youth wing of WWP] was selling

Bob's book. I couldn't believe it—a socialist party was not only for our struggle but had written a whole book to build it.

Bob's book traveled around the world and had a strong impact on our comrades in several other countries who were influenced by our analysis. In 1992 we reissued the book in a new edition [now titled "The Roots of Lesbian & Gay Oppression: A Marxist View"] with an updated introduction and afterward to address developments like the AIDS crisis.

Then there's the work of comrade Leslie Feinberg. Her books have raised consciousness about the special oppression of trans people. And she has introduced a generation of young militants to socialism.

There's our newspaper, which has covered this movement with hundreds and hundreds of articles written by activists who are directly involved.

There's also our unwavering solidarity with every socialist country and every country under attack by U.S. imperialism. When U.S. imperialism tried to portray the Cuban revolution as anti-gay, we were the most stalwart defenders of Cuba, exposing the purpose of this cynical maneuver and insisting on the Cuban people's right to address this issue as they saw fit. It was WWP that held meetings in defense of revolutionary Cuba at the LGBT Center [in New York City], meetings that were physically attacked by counterrevolutionary Cubans.

And we in WWP stand with Iran in defense of its sovereignty and take the stand that it is up to the Iranian people to address social issues as they see fit. Our solidarity against imperialism is unconditional.

What is the role of a revolutionary Marxist party with regard to the struggle for LGBT liberation? The role of the party is to advance that struggle in every way we can; to provide class-conscious analysis; to promote unity; to do what we can to move the struggle forward. Because this struggle is part and parcel of the larger struggle to build a new world, and that is the whole reason we exist.

The LGBT movement has made many gains in these 40 years since LGBT people fought the New York Police Department in the streets of the Village in June of 1969. There is an amazing, and amazingly swift, shift in consciousness among the masses. Every one of these gains is the result of struggle. But there are many more victories to be won, and none will be won without struggle. □

BOSTON FORUM:

'Stonewall 1969 ... LGBT LIBERATION 2009'

By Gerry Scoppettuolo
Boston

Members of the Boston LGBT Community marked the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion by participating in a vibrant and passionate forum on June 20 with the theme "Stonewall 1969 ... LGBT Liberation 2009: Fighting for our Lives and Liberation in the Global Capitalist Crisis." Members of the local African-American, youth, transgender and unionized LGBT communities came together to celebrate unity and the many struggles these communities participate in. The event was sponsored by Workers World Party and the Stonewall Warriors.

The forum was opened and chaired by Brian Majka of Stonewall Warriors. He introduced Frank Neisser of Stonewall Warriors and WWP, who gave an account of the Stonewall Rebellion and of the role and contributions of WWP throughout the 40 years of struggle since, including the analysis of the origins of LGBT oppression provided in books and pamphlets by WWP members Bob McCubbin and Leslie Feinberg. Neisser made clear how the struggle against LGBT oppression is part and parcel of the fight against capitalism and for socialism.

Imani Henry, trans playwright, performer and writer for Workers World newspaper, gave an analysis of the impact of the current economic crisis on LGBT communities. His remarks included many heartening notes, stressing that despite the November ballot passage of Proposition 8 in California banning same-sex marriage, our community succeeded in raising to a national level the struggle for marriage equality, against the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act signed in 1996 by President Bill Clinton, as well

as the ongoing battle against the vicious "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy against LGBT people in the military, also a legacy of the Clinton administration.

Henry described a massive shift in consciousness that is the direct result of 40 years of mass struggle by the LGBT community.

Henry had just returned from the four-day Peoples Summit and Tent City in Detroit and shared his experiences. Video clips and further impressions of the summit were shared by Jonathan Regis of the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—FIST.

Members of three different American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees locals, representing Harvard University, Boston Public Library clerical workers, and group home service workers gave firsthand accounts of their unions' fight-back struggles against layoffs. Tascha Campbell brought greetings from New Era, Boston's powerful new African-American, HIV activist LGBTQA (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning and allies) youth group.

Many who participated in the forum had also joined with the Stonewall Warriors in Boston LGBT Pride activities the previous week, including the Dyke March on June 19 and the massive annual LGBT Pride march on June 20. Leaflets distributed at both events announced the forum and hailed the 40th anniversary of Stonewall as well as this year's pride theme, "Trans-forming Our Community." □

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BAIL OUT THE PEOPLE A new world is urgently needed! **BUT WE MUST FIGHT FOR IT!**

Upstate New York Pride in struggle

By Marge Maloney & Minnie Bruce Pratt
Buffalo and Syracuse, N.Y.

This year's Pride march in Buffalo on June 7 was one of the best-attended lesbian, gay, bi and trans celebrations in this city's history. Throughout the entire march, individuals and organizational floats pressed the increasing demand for same-sex marriage.

By far, the largest LGBT contingent was high school youth from throughout the Buffalo region who have struggled to form gay-straight alliances, which fight homophobic and transphobic bullying in their schools.

The Buffalo chapter of the International Action Center marched carrying a banner which read: "Justice for Dr. Tiller! We can stop anti-woman, racist, anti-immigrant and homophobic violence—together!"

The response to the banner was positively electric: cheers, applause, thumbs up, shouts of encouragement and many, many photographs. Numerous women and men, who have participated in decades of ongoing struggle to keep women's clinics open in Buffalo, cheered the banner. A group of Latina lesbians chanted, "Si se puede" (Yes we can). Farther along, a group of African-American lesbians chanted in response: "Yes we can! Yes we can!"

The measure of support for the ban-

ner demanding justice for Dr. Tiller—who was slain because he provided full reproductive health care for women, including abortion—is particularly noteworthy. Dr. Barnett Slepian, who provided similar medical services for women, was gunned down in Buffalo in October 1998.

Central New York: Pride in struggle

In spite of an all-day rain on June 20, Central New York Pride can take pride in its turnout.

Last year some 100 right-wingers in matching uniforms and berets aggressively menaced and harassed marchers in Syracuse, where the CNY march takes place. But that threat didn't dampen the crowds that turned out this year—or their enthusiasm.

One of the most powerful and poignant contingents was made up of family and friends of Lateisha Green, who was killed in November 2008 because she was a transwoman.

The Syracuse Peace Council, which marches in CNY Pride every year, carried a banner which read, "There is no peace without social justice."

Lesbian IAC members from Buffalo traveled to join Syracuse IAC activists to participate in CNY Pride, marching under the banner which had generated so much excitement in Buffalo. Syracuse

activists rallied with LGBT friends and allies under the theme "Pride in Struggle/Orgullo en la Lucha." Signs demanded "Money for housing and education, not for war" and "The state has no right to legislate love." □



Top, Lateisha Green contingent in Syracuse.

Middle, Peace Council banner in Central New York march.

Left, Buffalo Pride march.

WW PHOTOS: LESLIE FEINBERG AND ELLIE DORRITIE

New book explores LGBT gains in Cuba

By Deirdre Griswold

Type the words "Cuba Day against Homophobia" into Google's search engine and you will find video clips and news stories about a festival on May 16 of this year in Havana and many other Cuban cities that raised public consciousness about the rights and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Mariela Castro Espin, director of the National Center of Sex Education (CENESEX), presided over the opening of the day's events with a parade, followed by a panel on "Sexual Diversity in the Cuban Family." Castro is the daughter of Cuban President Raúl Castro and of Vilma Espín, who headed the Cuban Federation of Women until her death.

Many of the marchers waved rainbow flags—a universal symbol for the beauty of sexual diversity.

Further evidence of the support that Cuba's Communist leaders are giving the campaign against homophobia came that day from Ricardo Alarcón, president of the Cuban National Assembly, who told Prensa Latina, Cuba's national press agency: "The essence of socialism is the inclusion rather than exclusion of people for their sexual orientation or religion."

The ceremonies started at the headquarters of the Union of Writers and Artists and the Pabellón Cuba, in the center of Havana. Talks, book displays, expositions, film showings and concerts were held throughout the day, all free and open to the public.

In Cuba the campaign against homophobia has access to all the mass media and is an ongoing educational effort, not just a one-day affair. This information may surprise many people in the United States, who get very little news from the

corporate media here about the great social progress that has been made in Cuba as a result of its revolution.

However, readers of Workers World newspaper were fortunate enough to learn a great deal about Cuba's campaign to rectify old prejudices through the series of articles called Lavender & Red. Appearing in these pages over several years, it was written by the widely read Marxist and transgender author Leslie Feinberg. Feinberg is also a managing editor of this newspaper. A total of 25 articles in the series dealt with the development of Cuba's enlightened position on LGBT rights.

These articles have now been edited into a new book, "Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba," which is being released this month by World View Forum.

The book is divided into sections: Pre-revolutionary Cuba; Early Years of the Revolution; Dealing with the AIDS Crisis; Popular Education; and Unfettered Thought. It draws on many sources, from early conquistadors to modern-day chroniclers of the LGBT movement in Cuba, to show how far the Caribbean island has come in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism, exploitation and all the forms that oppression takes.

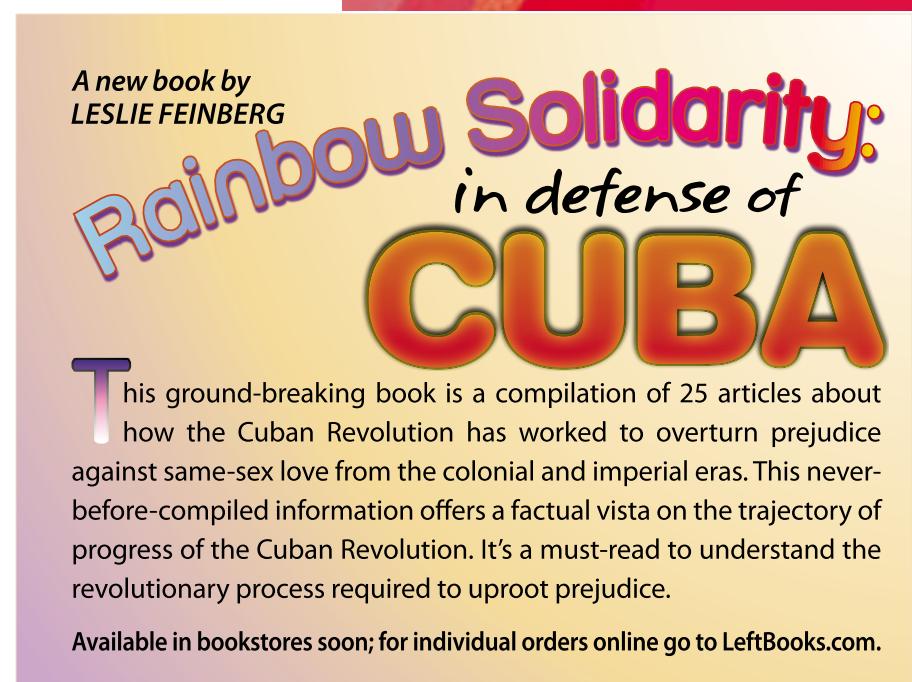
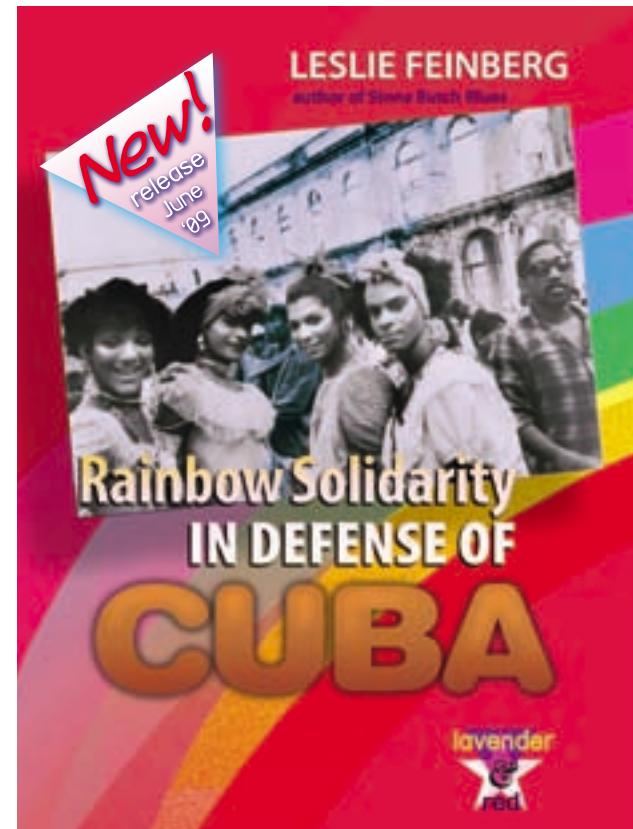
It deals with Hollywood's false images of gay life in Cuba; the Mariel boatlift; CENESEX and sex education; Cuba's successful and humane treatment of the HIV-AIDS epidemic; "Strawberry and Chocolate," "Gay Cuba" and other ground-breaking Cuban films; the campaign in the U.S. for Rainbow Solidarity with the Cuban Five, and much more.

Feinberg concludes the book with an appeal to the LGBT movement in the United States, where the government has tried to strangle the Cuban Revolution

from its very first days:

"In order to move forward toward their own liberation, the LGBT and other progressive movements in the U.S. and other capitalist countries have to combat anti-communism—which is, in the long run, a loyalty oath to capitalism—and develop a powerful anti-imperialist current that can extend its solidarity to Cuba and all countries fighting for their sovereignty and self-determination against finance capital."

"Rainbow Solidarity" can be ordered online from www.leftbooks.com. It will be widely distributed to bookstores and libraries by the Independent Publishers Group. □



A new book by
LESLIE FEINBERG

Rainbow Solidarity: in defense of CUBA

This ground-breaking book is a compilation of 25 articles about how the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn prejudice against same-sex love from the colonial and imperial eras. This never-before-compiled information offers a factual vista on the trajectory of progress of the Cuban Revolution. It's a must-read to understand the revolutionary process required to uproot prejudice.

Available in bookstores soon; for individual orders online go to LeftBooks.com.

DETROIT

People's Summit and Tent City spurs fightback

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

The People's Summit and Tent City was convened June 14-17 by a broad coalition of activists, many of whom were organizing under the banner of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions.

When coalition organizers in Detroit got wind that the National Business Summit, sponsored by the Detroit Economic Club, would be taking place in their city, they formed an alliance with a number of progressive labor, clergy and community members and organizations to create the People's Summit.

As big-business CEOs and corporate heads met at the GM Renaissance Center to discuss how to lay off more workers and get more concessions from the unions, working-class and oppressed people of all ages and nationalities came together to put forward a fight-back program and demand jobs at living wages or income for all, as well as the right to health care, housing, education and all human needs.

People's Summiteers were galled that the big-business summit took place in a city devastated by the economic crisis, at the headquarters of General Motors no less—GM, which just announced it was closing seven auto plants in Michigan alone.

The People's Summit, anchored by a Tent City at Grand Circus Park, twice marched on the GM Renaissance Center in militant actions to demand, "Bailout

the workers, not the banks and corporations!" Hundreds of workers took part in each protest.

The People's Summit and Tent City were thoroughly anti-capitalist in nature. Speeches and discussions lambasted the capitalist system of private ownership and exploitation, and demanded that people's needs must come first.

About 400 people registered and many more took part in the events held over the course of several days.

Some of the many activities included a "CEO Devastation Tour" of Detroit and a protest at the 36th District Court, complete with handing out "know your rights" leaflets to homeowners and renters facing foreclosure and eviction. The call for a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions, plant closings, layoffs and utility shutoffs was a major focus of the four-day event.

Differently-abled Detroiters led a protest demanding improved access to public facilities and increased general awareness of disability rights. Disabled activists spoke out at a Detroit City Council meeting where they received a promise that the Council would try to rectify their grievances.

Special sessions and discussion groups focused on immigrant rights, organizing a labor and union fight-back, youth and student struggles, the way forward for auto worker retirees, winning a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions, the crisis in public education, police brutality and prisoner rights. There was a strategizing session for the G20 protests that



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

are being organized for Sept. 24-25 in Pittsburgh.

Each evening, after a delicious and nutritious meal was prepared and served

by activist volunteers to several hundred people, a spirited and militant rally took place, along with music concerts and cultural entertainment. □

Some of the people at People's Summit



WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

Kudos to People's Summiteers 'Let's continue the fight'

Andrea Egypt, a leader of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, was entertainment co-coordinator for the People's Summit and Tent City in Detroit June 14-17. Below are excerpts from a letter she sent to Workers World.

The camaraderie and solidarity that was felt throughout the People's Summit was an example of what is possible and necessary to fuel the type of resistance needed to effectuate a much-needed systemic change by those who have been left out of the so-called economic recovery.

Kudos to those who camped out in tents to represent the homeless and to bring to consciousness the magnitude and impact of homelessness across the country, and the neglect to bail out those who have been swindled out of their homes, jobs and health care, which should be rights for all.

Kudos to the Latina/o participants, who educated about the struggle for immigrants' rights as they made clear who the enemy and aliens truly are and set straight the many questions surrounding their oppression. Their struggle is truly our struggle and we must remain bonded to their cause of common liberty and justice for all.

Kudos to the labor unionists who bravely and militantly showed that they still have fight in them, and who engaged in a spirited demonstration throughout the People's Summit. They will continue to be soldiers of solidarity for working-class people all over the world and be an ex-



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

ample of confrontation with the capitalist bosses who exploit their labor for profit.

Kudos to the cooks and many members of various organizations who did the labor in erecting the Tent City, doing cleanup, and other logistics that were so important. Their work was a most necessary component and very much appreciated from the beginning to the end.

Kudos to our performers of poets, Hip Hop artists, rock bands and folk singers who didn't think twice but showed up to use their talents for a worthy cause voluntarily as the people loved what they saw and heard.

Let us continue the fight! □

By Christopher Rykiel
Detroit

Grand Circus Park is a small park in downtown Detroit bisected by Woodward Avenue. For four days and three nights, people stayed in that park for the People's Summit and Tent City.

A wide variety of people attended. Differences in national origin and ethnicity, age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, location and other differences served to unite people. They came from all around the country, including Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana, Maryland, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey.

When asked why they participated, there were common themes and reasons. Many people were dealing with unemployment and being unable to find work, or working with slashed hours, wages and benefits, or lack of housing and foreclosures, or other ills of capitalist society.

Robert Thomas, an African-American Detroit local, volunteered and stayed at the Tent City. He's struggling to find consistent employment and get his GED.

Mike Martinez, a Latino member of FIST from Miami, volunteered too, even though he's now a part-time worker because his hours were cut.

Marguerite Maddox, an African-American Detroit local, came to voice the concerns of people with disabilities; she herself is laid off.

The People's Summit was a place of refuge and safety where workers from diverse

backgrounds expressed their opinions and issues without the fear of reprisal.

The second most stressed theme was starting a people's movement. Kim Greene, an African-American Detroit college student struggling with unemployment, emphasized that the People's Summit is about "addressing and culminating of the issues and a fight-back strategy."

Many people said that mobilizing the public starts from the youth. Scott Williams, a member of FIST from Chapel Hill, N.C., who balances being a student and worker, reasoned "as a youth organizer" that "youth in Detroit are hit the hardest by unemployment, a dysfunctional education system, and police brutality."

Rosendo Delgado, a Mexican-American Detroit local who was laid off by Chrysler, said, "All workers need to understand that immigrant workers are oppressed by the same multinational corporations and banks that oppress workers born in the U.S." He explained how our enemy is not fellow workers of other countries, but the bosses who exploit us for their extravagant profits.

Teresa Gutierrez, a Latina lesbian and activist for the Workers World Party, remarked that the People's Summit made her feel "tremendously optimistic for the future."

Rykiel is a college student and unemployed worker from Baltimore who volunteered with the People's Summit. He is a FIST activist and organizer against foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs.

Protesters crash apartheid 'beach party'

By Dolores Cox
New York

A lone man sat on a bench in Central Park on the edge of a mock beach holding a sign reading, "When do we Jews notice that Israel is insane?" Police told him that he must leave, as that area of the public park belonged to Israel for the day. But more protesters came, and they refused to be silenced.

The Palestinian organization Al-Awda New York, organizers of the protest, stated: "On June 21st, Central Park is being handed over to Israel for the day to set up a 'Tel-Aviv Beach.' The Zionist Tourism Commissioner says the event is about the 'fun and lightheartedness of Tel Aviv,' but in reality it is a celebration of ethnic cleansing and genocide."

The Israeli Tourism Commission promoted the day as a celebration of Tel Aviv's 100 years of existence. The "beach" area was located in front of the Central Park Bandshell, site of many summertime concerts. A giant, double-sided billboard loomed with an enticing photo of Tel Aviv's beach filled with sunbathers, hotels and sailboats.

On the stage a band played loud music, and below people danced. An enormous square sandbox was erected on the ground. Inside, adults and children played with beach balls, Frisbees and other beach toys. There were bikinis, beach chairs and umbrellas, banners and Israeli flags. And of course, literature tables advertising Tel Aviv's beach resort: "Vacation in Israel!"

Everything was there—except the truth. For instance, that Tel Aviv was created by the destruction and replacement of the Palestinian port city of Jaffa, along with the killing and expulsion of its people. It's estimated that 95 percent of Jaffa's residents were displaced. Today there are around 70,000 Palestinian refugees from Jaffa, according to Al-Awda.

The city of Jaffa goes back more than 6,000 years. Because of its vitality, the city was known as "the Bride of Palestine." Jaffa was central to the Palestinian economy, culture and national identity before the 1948 Nakba ("catastrophe") when the Zionist military arrived, backed by the U.S. and Britain.

Jaffa was finally shut down by the Israeli settler state in the 1950s.

"Tel Aviv was designated as a colonial space for white European colonizers planted in the heart of the native Arab population in Palestine—in much the same way as Europeans established themselves in apartheid South Africa," noted Al-Awda.

The day's "beach party" was no more than a pep rally for Zionists. There was a major New York Police presence, in uniform and plainclothes. Protestors were corralled by barricades, and no protesters were permitted to leave the barricades with their signs in hand. Hecklers walked by, as well as people engaging in conver-

sation and seeking more information.

Al-Awda's protest of this "celebration of atrocity and expulsion" was joined by demonstrators from several organizations, including the International Action Center, Code Pink, Socialist Action, Palestinian Action Union Square East, the ANSWER Coalition, and others, including two Israelis students studying in the U.S.

One of the students, Naama, said she was there because "It's important for Israel to be reminded of its crimes against the Palestinians. There is no happiness in this event, and the price paid by Palestinians and others must be mentioned. Israel's behavior of 42 years is apartheid, and its liberal presentation of itself is a lie." □

'Viva Palestina U.S.' caravan

At a press conference on the steps of New York's City Hall June 22, City Councilor Charles Barron announced that he will join British Member of Parliament George Galloway and anti-war Vietnam vet Ron Kovic on their humanitarian aid convoy to Gaza in Palestine.

The "Viva Palestina U.S." caravan, which comes on the heels of the 100-vehicle convoy Galloway organized from Britain, was made necessary by the U.S./Israeli siege of Gaza that started after Hamas' 2006 electoral victory. Galloway and Barron noted the corporate media's hypocritical focus on Iran while Gazans continue to starve because they exercised their right to vote. "Palestinians have the right to choose their own leaders," Barron said.

—Report and photo by Tony Murphy



A queer youth's perspective

Tent City a 'most amazing' experience

Continued from page 1

and the solidarity that could be seen in that park in downtown Detroit made clear to me that socialism can and will someday exist in the U.S. It made it clear to me in a way that no book could.

The demonstrations and rallies that took place during the People's Summit and Tent City were very powerful, but the most powerful part of the People's Summit was the interactions that were had on a daily basis among activists, organizers, workers, youth and people just off the street.

It was a true place for workers to connect, be heard and hear each other, and see the potential in struggle. An example of this was when, after FIST members had talked casually with about a dozen youth present on June 14, an impromptu meeting was called near an empty fountain behind the stage.

After some initial shyness on the part of the youth—who I believe were all African American and one Latino—they just opened up. One young man said, "My name is Patrick, and I'm fucking pissed that I have to jump from state to state just to find a job." Another young woman was a teacher, who yelled about how there aren't enough desks in her classroom and she stands for six hours a day so that her students can use her desk at the front of the class.

You just knew that some of these young people never get the opportunity to express the struggles they are living through. Their frustration was so palpable. A lot of them had just passed through the area and saw the Tent City, but they came back the second and third days, marched on the GM Renaissance Center, and now some of them are seriously talking about building a FIST chapter in Detroit.

The People's Summit also provided a



Impromptu youth meeting at Detroit summit, June 15.

WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

space for those militant sections of the labor movement who have watched their unions barely respond to the economic crisis—at least, barely respond in a fight-back manner, in a way that would push the struggle forward.

The rally for jobs held June 16 in front of the Renaissance Center was the first demonstration in opposition to GM following their announcement of bankruptcy. It included GM, Chrysler and American Axle workers. Martha Grevatt from Cleveland was treated like a rock star after her militant talk about taking back the plants. Workers shook her hand as she passed.

This also was a place where another sector of workers that is rarely ever heard could be heard, and that's the homeless. Because of the level of respect between the organizers of the People's Summit and the homeless people, some of whom live in Grand Circus Park where the Tent City was held, homeless people took active ownership of the event, taking on organizational and logistical responsibilities, as

well as taking the microphone to discuss their struggles.

Every night, when volunteers at the Tent City provided a delicious meal, the lines of people would swell to several hundred. And every person got fed, whether they had a dime to give or not. It wasn't on a charity basis, but a solidarity one—everyone was eating the same food; everyone sat down for dinner and had lively conversations together, or listened to speeches or music.

A microcosm of what's ahead

I've never seen a park so full of people be so clean; it was like everyone consciously picked up after themselves in solidarity with each other.

Everyone took ownership of the People's Summit, from City Councilperson JoAnn Watson to the youth who didn't want to leave when the Summit was over, to the pastor who opened up his church next door for meal preparation, to the random people who came through.

The gathering was also highly political and highly educational at the same time. The political consciousness of many of the attendees was noticeably high. There was eager agreement on a program of militant fight-back.

There also was no discomfort about discussing socialism, about the need for unity amongst Black and Brown, women and men, LGBT and straight. There was also none of this "why are we talking about so many issues?" that you hear sometimes—no, it seemed that everybody understood the need to connect the wars at home and abroad, the immigrant rights struggle with struggles against police brutality, for disability rights and against evictions.

And while some people may have come with some backwardness on some of these questions, they readily changed their views when shown the perspective of unity. I saw it several times. Young men who were approaching women in a sexualized, disrespectful way went about it differently after seeing those women as leaders in struggle.

Another person had made bigoted remarks about LGBT people but changed his tune following a short discussion after the leader of the Triangle Foundation gave her speech. It was truly an example of how solidarity is advanced as struggle progresses.

The People's Summit and Tent City showed the potential for so much—for militant struggle; for multi-national, multi-gendered, multi-sexual unity; for real community and labor collaboration; for socialism in the U.S.—it isn't quite as far away as some may think. □

LeiLani Dowell is a managing editor of Workers World newspaper and a leader of FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—a revolutionary national youth organization.



Who killed Neda Agha-Soltan?

Consider this scenario:

A CIA-trained sharpshooter takes position on a rooftop in Tehran. His contact on the street below, waiting with a camera, calls. "She just got out of the car. A perfect target."

He takes aim. Shoots. He disappears.

On the street, the contact takes the video of the young woman, her face visible and unscarred, helped by people on the street around her, bleeding to death.

Within an hour, the video arrives to an Iranian contact in the Netherlands, to the BBC, to the Voice of America. It becomes part of a much bigger story.

Is that what happened to Neda Agha-Soltan? We admit it. We don't know. But you don't know either. And the story outlined above is—if anything—more reasonable and more believable than the story spread and repeated ad infinitum by the powerful Western media propaganda machine.

The young woman, whoever she sympathized with, was in no confrontation with the authorities. Nor with paramili-

tary forces. She was away from the main demonstration. Why, when there were no significant gunfights and no big fighting in the area, would any state official, police or army, shoot an unarmed woman who wasn't even at the protest and who had no political history?

How was it that the photographer had contact with the media most closely connected with the intelligence forces of the two major former colonial powers in Iran—Britain and the U.S.?

Coincidences happen. But here a lot happened at once. Was someone behind it?

What we can be sure of is that the corporate media based in the imperialist countries are powerful weapons that in times of crisis sow confusion among the masses and mobilize public opinion in support of the rulers and to demonize the oppressed and exploited.

In these times of the Internet, we have to remember that disinformation spreads with the same lightning speed as information. □

Behind the turmoil in Iran

By John Catalinotto

The confrontation among Iran's ruling politicians that has brought large crowds into the streets of Tehran is not taking place in isolation. It is happening in a country still facing U.S. sanctions and warships, hostility from every imperialist capital and venom from the West's corporate media.

This confrontation follows 30 years of a concerted effort by the U.S. and other imperialists to turn back the enormously popular revolution that took place in 1979. That revolution stopped short of moving Iran toward socialism. But it broke the grip of the imperialist overseers

and their puppet shah over a country that now has 71 million people in an area three times the size of France.

The imperialists have nothing good to say about this revolution's advances in education, health care and science. They abhor its support for revolutionary movements in Palestine and Lebanon. Washington has sought out every weakness or internal conflict in Iran in an attempt to split the leadership and reverse the revolution.

Even President Barack Obama's apparently conciliatory speech in Cairo, where he admitted the U.S. intervention in 1953 that overthrew Iran's democratic government and replaced it with the shah, was aimed at strengthening those in Iran's leadership who want to accommodate to the U.S. rather than confront it.

Playing "bad cop" to Obama's softer speech are U.S. warships armed with jet bombers and missiles that regularly cruise the Gulf around Iran, threatening to annihilate Iran's nuclear power program. Israel adds to the threats, which are seen by the many Iranians with satellite dishes who watch CNN or get news coverage from California-based Farsi-language stations.

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tainly demand Iran stop its support for liberation movements, as in Palestine and Lebanon.

Under other circumstances, the West has and might again vilify both these politicians; now it praises them.

The Mousavi-Rafsanjani group first raised the question of alleged fraud even before the voting was over. According to the first official announcement, Ahmadinejad won the election with 63 percent while Mousavi got 34 percent of the 40-million-plus votes.

The landslide victory, though the opposition treats it as too large to be credible, is consistent with earlier polls and with the 2005 election. U.S.

pollsters Ken Ballen and Patrick Doherty write that their sample of a thousand Iranians across all 30 provinces indicated a two-to-one win for Ahmadinejad. (Washington Post, June 15) This gap was also true among Azeris, Iran's second-largest ethnic group, even though Mousavi is Azerbai. The two pollsters' conclusion was that Ahmadinejad probably won.

As of June 23, Iran's Guardian Council has approved the election. The council had reported "irregularities" in 50 cities that might involve as many as 3 million votes. These discrepancies could simply involve people who voted outside their home district, which is allowed in Iranian elections. In any case, they would not change the outcome.

Demonstrations in Tehran

By the weekend of June 20-21, the Western media's massive coverage began to emphasize alleged state repression of the demonstrations in Tehran. These protests had reached mass proportions in the week of June 15-20 and spread outside the elite neighborhoods that are the stronghold of the anti-Ahmadinejad forces. The size of the protests has since diminished.

What about the demonstrations in Western cities—most recently in London against a G20 summit—where police tactics were brutal and led to fatalities? Peru's government recently carried out a massive slaughter of Indigenous demonstrators. U.S. police routinely kill African-American and Latina/o youth. Haitians continue to be shot down in Port-au-Prince for demanding the return of their democratically elected president, who was forcibly flown into exile by U.S. agents.

Yet the corporate media never turn their hostile spotlight on these countries the way they are doing against the Iran regime.

The demonstrations indicate anger that goes beyond the election results. Mousavi clearly is more popular with better-off Iranians. However, some of the anger in the streets may reflect legitimate demands to improve workers' and women's rights. Of Iran's 3.5 million university students—a six-fold growth since the pro-Western shah's rule—more than 60 percent are now women. (Spiegel Online, June 10) This is a huge gain for women, yet at the same time they are far less likely than men to find jobs.

Even the presence of some legitimate grievances doesn't mean a struggle is leading in a progressive direction. Capitalist politicians know how to appeal to mass dissatisfaction in order to pursue their own agenda. The danger here is that U.S. imperialism, a hugely powerful enemy of the Iranian revolution, which can harm Iran both economically and militarily, is doing all it can to foment and capitalize on this struggle—in the name of democracy, of course. □

U.N. attacks Jean-Juste's funeral in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

The Haitian people are beginning to shake loose the chains around their struggle. They are putting up a determined resistance to MINUSTAH—the U.N.'s occupation force in Haiti—as well as the U.S. and the Haitian ruling class and its government.

When mourners gathered June 18 in Port-au-Prince's cathedral to celebrate the life and leadership of Father Gérard Jean-Juste, a hero in the Haitian people's struggle in both the United States and Haiti, the mood was clearly anti-occupation.

Most of the crowd came from the poor and working-class neighborhoods of Solino, Martissant, Bel Air and Cite Soleil—areas of the capital where support for the return of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from exile in South Africa is the strongest. According to eyewitnesses, that sentiment was strongly expressed by the crowd.

As mourners were leaving the cathedral to get on buses to go to Jean-Juste's burial in southern Haiti, a scuffle broke out. MINUSTAH used this as an excuse to move in. The troops arrested a mourner with dreads wearing a T-shirt with a picture of Jean-Juste and shot a mourner who died, identified only by his first name, Junior. This obvious attempt to disrupt the event did not succeed.

The commanders of the U.N. force denied they were responsible, but the incident was filmed by Radio Tele Ginen and witnessed by Kim Ives, a journalist with the New York based *Haiti-Liberté*, who gave an eyewitness account on the WBAI radio show "Haiti: the Struggle Continues" that same evening.

All along the route taken by the cortège, there were signs and banners wishing Jean-Juste "bon voyage" and calling

for the return of Aristide. At Mirogoâne, a rally heard speakers from Fanmi Lavalas, Aristide's party, and Veye Yo, the relief organization Jean-Juste founded.

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton began his new job as U.N. special envoy to Haiti on June 15. According to a report on the Haiti Action Web site, some mourners shouted, "Thank you, Bill Clinton, your U.N. assassins have murdered another member of Lavalas!"

While Clinton certainly supports the tactic of keeping Lavalas from winning elections by keeping it off the ballot, his new job really has a different focus.

He wants to keep Haiti a rock-bottom, low-cost garment producer generating the greatest possible profits. His claim of a special relationship with Haiti came when he was president. His administration forced Haiti to open its markets and delayed President Aristide's return after a U.S.-backed coup.

A key part of the U.S./U.N. strategy that Clinton and the departing U.S. ambassador are pushing is making Haiti "attractive for international investment"—that is, keeping wages extremely low.

In response to this, students at the University of Haiti in Port-au-Prince are waging a sharp struggle over the minimum wage. It is currently 70 gourdes for an eight-hour day—the equivalent of \$1.65 a day. The Haitian parliament passed a law in May raising the minimum wage to 200 gourdes a day (a little more than \$5), but President René Préval has refused to publish the law, keeping it from taking effect.

University students in Haiti are privileged in a country where 55 to 60 percent of adults are illiterate, and only 20 percent of the youth even start high school. In 2004, they were one of the groups that supported the coup against Aristide. But now, faced with no prospect of getting a

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U.S.-backed Somali government calls for intervention

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The worsening security situation in Somalia has prompted the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government to declare a state of emergency and issue a call for military support from neighboring countries and the international community. Attacks on the fragile security apparatus, resulting in the death of Minister Omar Hashi Aden, have created panic among officials in the TFG and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

AMISOM has 4,300 troops stationed in the capital of Mogadishu. The troops have been accused of launching attacks that have led to the deaths of hundreds of Somali civilians.

The AMISOM operation is heavily underwritten by the U.S. government to the tune of over \$160 million. Troops involved in AMISOM are from Uganda and Burundi, two regimes allied with the U.S. that have received substantial military assistance over the years.

As AMISOM military forces indiscriminately bombed and shelled residential areas, reportedly killing 30 people and wounding 100 others, thousands of Somalis fled the capital between June 19 and 22. They added to the 400,000 people who have already taken up residence in the Afgooye corridor, about 20 kilometers south of the capital.

Clashes took place on June 20 in Hamarweh, a suburb of Mogadishu. Other fighting was reported in the northern Karan district. "I saw heavily armed Islamist fighters advancing onto Hamarweh area. They are firing mortar shells and government forces are retaliating," said Mogadishu resident Warsameh Ahmed. (French Press Agency, June 22) Ahmed added, "It seems [the Islamists] are close to taking control of the area."

On June 20, the speaker of the parliament for the TFG, Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nor (also known as Madobe), held a press

conference in the capital where he made an urgent appeal for military intervention. (FPA, June 22) Madobe stated that the TFG was on the verge of collapse and accused Al-Qaeda of being behind the recent offensive against the government that began on May 7. Two resistance movements, Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam, have taken the lead in the struggle to remove the government of Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.

"The government is weakened by the rebel forces. We ask neighboring countries—including Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Yemen—to send troops to Somalia within 24 hours. We have a state of emergency in this country because foreign fighters from all over the world are fighting the government," said Madobe.

The African Union Commission and the Organization of Islamic Conference have also called for intervention.

Ethiopian troops re-enter southern region

There have been reports that Ethiopian troops have already re-entered Somalia in the southern region of Bakol. Ethiopian military forces occupied Somalia at the behest of the U.S. from December 2006 to January 2009. Resistance from the Islamic Courts Union (UIC) and other groups led to the withdrawal of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian regime relied upon U.S. intelligence and logistical support during its intervention in Somalia. A negotiated settlement with moderate forces inside the UIC created a new transitional government led by Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. However, Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam have refused to enter the TFG until all AMISOM forces are withdrawn and the composition of the government is changed.

Despite recent reports of Ethiopian military troops inside of Somalia, the government in Addis Ababa has denied involvement and says that it will intervene only if there is an international mandate from the United Nations.

According to Mohammed Adow of Al-Jazeera, "Ethiopia has got a big stake in

what is going on in Somalia because it believes that its security would be threatened if the Islamist militias, such as Al-Shabab, take over Somalia. But I doubt it is sending its forces into Somalia, unless it gets its actions sanctioned by the United Nations, which would take weeks, if not months." (June 22)

The government in Kenya has also threatened military involvement in Somalia. Prime Minister Raila Odinga held a joint press conference on June 22 with Somalia Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmake to discuss the situation. (Kenya Daily Nation)

"When I was in Geneva last week, I talked to various agencies to help Somalia deal with the problem, and to also help us deal with the influx of refugees into Kenya. There is also a need to provide military assistance to deal with the situation in Somalia," said Odinga.

In Kismayu, a port city 311 miles (500 kilometers) from Mogadishu, local authorities allied with the Islamic resistance forces accused the Kenyan government of intervening in the area. Sheikh Hassan Ya'qub, who heads the local Islamic administration, said that the Kenyans should stop their involvement in the city as well as in the Jubba regions in southern Somalia. (Shabelle Media Network, June 21)

"We are warning Kenya. We are saying to them that we are not in a glass house so if you continue interfering in Somali affairs or attack our people or country, we shall not be silent. We shall attack locations in Nairobi," said Ya'qub. Shabelle Media Network reported Kenyan troops have moved to the border between the two countries.

Oppose imperialist-backed intervention

Any attempts to engage in another large-scale invasion and occupation of Somalia must be opposed by the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements in the U.S.

In 1992 the first Bush administration sent thousands of Marines into Somalia under the code name "Operation Restore

Hope." The aim was purportedly to supply material aid since there was no recognized central government. The operation was soon exposed as an imperialist occupation and met fierce resistance from the Somali people, resulting in the withdrawal of U.S. forces by 1994. Thousands of Somalis, however, died at the hands of the U.S. and other allied forces, which included the former colonial power of Italy as well as Canada.

Since 2001, U.S. administrations have charged Somalia with being a haven for Al-Qaeda. The most recent advances by Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam have been blamed on Al-Qaeda. Both organizations have denied any affiliation with Al-Qaeda, and state emphatically that they are based in Somalia and concerned about the foreign interference in their country.

With the failure of the U.S.-backed occupation carried out by Ethiopia, the Obama administration has increased support for AMISOM forces inside the country. But only Uganda and Burundi have sent troops to prop up the TFG, while other African states have refused to intervene.

The so-called "piracy problem" has also been utilized as a justification for greater U.S. and European Union involvement, which involves stationing warships to patrol the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. The Kenya government, which has called for military intervention in Somalia, recently agreed to the establishment of a "piracy tribunal" on its territory where Somalis captured at sea can be detained and prosecuted.

After the Ethiopian military invaded Somalia in December 2006, the worst humanitarian crisis in Africa was created. It has been reported that over 1 million people have been dislocated since Ethiopia's occupation began, and some 300,000 have perished.

The imperialist adventures of the U.S. and its allies in Somalia will be met with further resistance. The Somali people have demonstrated over the years that they are prepared and willing to defend the sovereignty of their country. □

U.N. attacks funeral in Haiti

Continued from page 10

job in the midst of a worldwide economic crisis and in a country where unemployment runs at 70 percent and wages are declining, they are out on the streets protesting.

One of their targets is Andy Apaid, who holds both U.S. and Haitian citizenship and is a prominent business spokesperson. He claimed that raising the daily minimum wage even to 125 gourdes would drive many garment manufacturers out of business. Apaid was also one of the leaders of the 2004 coup against Aristide.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton made a brief trip to Haiti back in April. She visited one of Apaid's plants and praised it as "exactly what needs to happen across Haiti many, many times over." (State Department Web site)

A run-off election for the Haitian Senate is scheduled for June 21. Haitian voters made it clear during the first round in March, when less than 3 percent of eligible voters went to the polls, that if the party and president they want are not allowed to run, they are not going to vote.

The struggle in Haiti does indeed continue. □

Remember the Soweto Rebellion!

By Caleb T. Maupin

On June 16, 1976, the apartheid regime of South Africa faced the heroic Soweto Uprising.

Students in Soweto, a section of Johannesburg, marched peacefully against the imposition of the colonial language in the segregated Black schools. This language was an insult to the colonized population, on top of the horrific terror they faced in their everyday lives.

The police opened fire on the march. Among the first people killed in this barrage of repression was a student named Hector Pieterson. He was only 13 years old when he was killed for marching against South Africa's racist, U.S.-backed regime. His fellow students carried his corpse; the image was immortalized in a world-famous photograph.

People from across South Africa came to support the ensuing rebellion of the students. The student revolutionaries and their allies bombed and set fire to symbols of oppression, and fought the state forces in the streets.

Hoping to squash the struggle for freedom, the oppressors responded brutally.



Helicopters randomly fired machine guns into crowds. Corpses lay in piles around the Soweto police station.

Revolutionaries symbolically destroyed this police station during the aftermath of the rebellion.

U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger canceled a scheduled appearance in South Africa. The imperialists he represented did not wish to highlight their support for mass murder.

A mass memorial for the victims was banned. At first, the South African regime

attempted to claim that only 23 people had been killed. Now, most agree that the death toll most likely exceeded 600, possibly reaching 1,000.

Mass struggles, both armed and unarmed, defeated the apartheid regime. Divestment campaigns were carried out on campuses. Mass demonstrations were held throughout the world.

Longshore workers in the U.S. refused to unload ships from South Africa. Socialist countries supplied aid to the resistance. Cuba sent its own soldiers to fight the apartheid regime's armies in Angola.

The African National Congress is now the strongest political party in the country. Nelson Mandela, the imprisoned leader of the resistance movement, served as president of the country for five years after the downfall of apartheid.

June 16 is now "Youth Day" in South Africa, to honor the student rebels in a country where apartheid is no more. When it fell—thanks to heroic struggles of the people—the Soweto student rebel slogan "Amandla!" ("Power to the people!") was heard throughout the world. □

DEL AMAZONAS A LOS ANDES

La lucha indígena sacude al Perú

Por Berta Joubert

El 5 de junio el presidente peruano Alan García desató sus fuertemente armadas fuerzas represivas en contra de los/as indígenas en la región amazónica del país. El pueblo indígena ha estado defendiendo esos enormes recursos naturales en contra de la voracidad de las corporaciones transnacionales.

Irónicamente, ese mismo día había sido designado por la Organización de las Naciones Unidas como el Día Mundial del Medioambiente para motivar concientización sobre los problemas medioambientales y promover alguna acción política.

Los ataques ocurrieron en la Curva del Diablo, una sección de la carretera que une la selva con la parte norte del país. Por 10 días, miles de indígenas Awajún y Wampis habían estado ocupando y obstruyendo el camino para poner presión sobre el gobierno.

Al amanecer, tres helicópteros de la Policía Nacional de Perú volaron sobre la región lanzando gases lacrimógenos y disparando contra la multitud indefensa. Al mismo tiempo en tierra, la policía le disparaba con rifles. Hasta hoy aún no se sabe el número exacto de víctimas. La prensa capitalista, la cual ha sido hostil hacia los/as indígenas y leal al gobierno, repitió las acusaciones de García diciendo que los indígenas son "terroristas" reportando que han asesinado a 24 oficiales de la policía, mientras que sólo 9 indígenas han muerto.

Sin embargo, un reporte que contradice esa aseveración apareció el 13 de junio en la revista virtual Lucha Indígena editada por Hugo Blanco, de una persona que estaba en Baguá, el lugar de la masacre.

El reporte refleja lo que muchas fuentes dicen en el área. "Los cadáveres de los nativos quedaron regados por toda la carretera próxima y en las inmediaciones de la Curva del Diablo, la policía tomó el control, de inmediato se declaró el toque de queda, empezó el apilamiento de los cadáveres, la cremación en plena carretera, otros fueron trasladados a lugares no determinados, ni ubicados, embolsados y trasladados a los helicópteros de la policía que en un número de hasta tres apoyaron el operativo. Muchos de estos cadáveres de humildes peruanos fueron arrojados a los ríos Marañón y Utcubamba, los mestizos de Bagua Chica y Bagua Grande estiman en un mínimo de 200 a 300 muertos de civiles". (www.luchaindigena.com)

Aunque la policía rehusó dejar entrar a periodistas, familiares y a otras personas indígenas al área, una gran cantidad de información ha sido diseminada por fuentes alternativas, incluyendo periodistas belgas que estaban presentes. Mucha de la información se puede ver en YouTube que ha sido circulado por todo el mundo.

¿Qué causó la masacre?

El 9 de abril, luego de infructuosos intentos de negociar con el gobierno, la Asociación Interétnica para el Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana, (AIDESEP), organización que representa a 300.000 indígenas y 1.350 comunidades, comenzó a movilizar al pueblo amazónico. La cuestión central era la implementación por el gobierno de varias leyes que los/as indígenas dicen que privatizarán y pondrán en peligro al Amazonas y los medios de sustento de numerosas comunidades nativas.

Comenzaron a ocupar carreteras, aero-

puertos pequeños, oleoductos y gasoductos e interrumpiendo el transporte en los ríos. Estas acciones efectivamente paralizaron la región y obstruyeron la producción y el transporte de hidrocarburos en el área.

El pueblo amazónico exigía en particular la derogación de la nueva Ley Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre y la Ley de Recursos Hídricos, decretos número 1090 y 1064.

Estas leyes abrirían la zona amazónica a un aumento en la explotación de minerales, petróleo, gas y madera.

Para poner todo esto en su contexto hay que notar que el pueblo peruano de la región amazónica conforma un 11 por ciento de la población total. Reside en el norte, centro y sureste del país, en la más grande de las tres zonas ricas en recursos naturales del país. Estas leyes fueron impuestas ilegalmente. Las leyes tanto del Perú como de la ONU para la protección de los pueblos indígenas, requieren que cualquier regulación que pueda afectar a sus comunidades tiene que ser negociada con anticipación con esas comunidades.

En vez de negociar, el Presidente García impuso los decretos para satisfacer los requisitos del Tratado de Libre Comercio del Perú con los EEUU. Este acuerdo, denominado el Tratado de Promoción de Comercio entre Perú y EEUU (PTPA por las siglas en inglés) fue firmado en 2006 y entró en vigor el 1ro de febrero. El lugar en la red (Web) de la PTPA dice que este acuerdo va a "resultar en una significativa liberalización del comercio de productos y servicios entre los EEUU y Perú. ... Perú de inmediato eliminó la mayoría de sus aranceles sobre las exportaciones de los EEUU. ... [El acuerdo también] in-

cluye disciplinas importantes en relación a... la facilitación del comercio, barreras técnicas al comercio, compras del gobierno, servicios, inversiones, telecomunicaciones, comercio electrónico, derechos de propiedad intelectual, y protección laboral y del ambiente". (www.usit.gov/trade-agreements)

Solidaridad forzó concesiones

Una abundante expresión de solidaridad con la lucha indígena se dio por medio de declaraciones escritas y de manifestaciones. Este apoyo de todos los sectores sociales organizados y partidos progresistas no sólo en Perú sino internacionalmente, forzó una concesión del gobierno de García. En la noche del 15 de junio fue anunciado que el gobierno tomaría medidas al día siguiente para derogar los decretos 1090 y 1064.

En reacción a esta noticia, la presidenta interina de la AIDESEP, Daysi Zapata, declaró que "es una reacción tardía del Ejecutivo... debemos ver realidades. ... los pueblos ya están cansados de promesas... existe tanta desconfianza". Ella exigió el fin a la persecución de los cuatro líderes de la organización y la terminación del estado de sitio en Bagua. Zapata ha estado a la cabeza de la organización desde el 9 de junio cuando su presidente, Alberto Pizango, tuvo que pedir asilo político en la embajada de Nicaragua por haber recibido amenazas de muerte.

Tal vez la decisión del gobierno estuvo influenciada por las muchas demandas de que García y toda su administración renuncien. El surgimiento generalizado de movilizaciones en apoyo al pueblo amazónico alrededor del país es algo que nunca ha sucedido. Es probable que García piense que la derogación de las leyes, si de verdad ocurre, lo va a excusar a él. Sin embargo, las protestas siguen aumentando diariamente.

Un artículo de Carlos Quiroz, un bloguero bilingüe basado en Washington que está en comunicación constante con las organizaciones peruanas, informó sobre una entrevista con Zapata la noche del lunes después de que se supo la decisión del gobierno. Dice Zapata: "Nos quieren callar encarcelándonos, pero eso es inútil porque cuando se encarcela un líder, muchos líderes más surgirán". Refiriéndose al carácter masivo de las protestas, dijo: "No hay ninguna región quieta; se están manifestando pidiendo justicia por las muertes de nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Bagua y para la derogación de los decretos de García que son tan negativos para nuestra gente indígena".

Quiroz menciona en ese mismo artículo que "el líder indígena Miguel Palacín me había dicho que [una nueva constitución] es una de las metas ahora del movimiento indígena, siguiendo los ejemplos de nuestros países vecinos, Ecuador y Bolivia". (peruanista.blogspot.com)

Los levantamientos indígenas en esos dos países resultaron en la eliminación de gobiernos derechistas neoliberales y la instalación de presidentes progresistas que luego, con las ideas y contribuciones de sus pueblos, crearon constituciones nuevas. ¿Sucederá lo mismo en Perú?

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El próximo artículo: ¿Quién es Alan García? El silencio de Washington.



MO FOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

de Justicia en el Comercio [Trade Justice] de Nueva York, quienes convocaron la acción del 10 de junio, habían presentado al personal de Schumer un reporte de la Oficina de Washington sobre América Latina donde se predecía la violencia e inestabilidad si el tratado fuese aprobado.

La activista indígena peruana Ana María Quispe del grupo Tiksigroup dijo: "Chuck Schumer, el Presidente Barack Obama y otros políticos que apoyaron el

Tratado de Libre Comercio Peruano deben rendir cuentas por un acuerdo por el cual fueron avisados que tendrían consecuencias desastrosas en cuanto a los derechos humanos y el medio ambiente. Desgraciadamente, a ellos les interesaba más servir a los beneficiarios verdaderos de este acuerdo — las mismas corporaciones e industrias financieras enormes responsables por la actual crisis económica".

— Reportaje por John Catalinotto

Antes del voto sobre el TLC, miembros/as del Tiksigroup, un grupo cultural de indígenas peruanos/as de Nueva Jersey, y